



Virginia Resource-Use Education Council

P.O. Box 90778 Henrico, Virginia 23228

Founded 1952

FINAL Business Meeting Minutes, May 27, 2015

Meeting start: 10:00 AM End: 4:15 PM

The May 2015 VRUEC business meeting was held at Mary Baldwin College.

VRUEC Member Agency Representatives present: Joe Baust (Longwood University), Carol Hopper Brill (VIMS), Denny Casey (VA Museum of Natural History), Alycia Crall (VMN), Lisa Deaton (DOF), Stephanie DeNicola (Culpeper SWCD), Dee DeRoche (DHR), Cindy Duncan (CBF), Greg Eaton (Claytor Nature Center), Mike Foreman (DCR VOEE), Suzie Gilley (DGIF), Candace Lutzow-Felling (State Arboretum of VA/UVA), David Olli (SMV), Bill Portlock (CBF), Ellen Powell (DOF), Ann Regn (DEQ), Eric Rhoades (DOE), Beth Sokolik (VASWCD), Tim Taglauer (Shenandoah National Park), Tamra Willis (Mary Baldwin College), Virginia Witmer (DEQ), Sonya Wolen (Danville Science Center), Anne Wright (VRUEC Rice Center), Barbara Young (DOE), Carol Zokaite (DCR VOEE).

Guests: Sheila Barnett (DCR OEE), Russ Baxter (Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources for the Chesapeake Bay), Courtney Hallacher (Shenandoah Valley EE), Krista Hodges (Dan River Basin Assn.), Page Hutchinson (DEQ/Project WET), Kathryn Paxton (VDACS), David Ruble (DCR OEE), Amanda Nicholson (Wildlife Center of VA)

Welcome and Introductions- Lisa Deaton welcomed the group to Mary Baldwin College and attendees introduced themselves.

Approve 2014 meeting minutes from January 14 and May 28- Beth Sokolik presented the draft minutes from January 2014 and May 2014.

- January 2014 Minutes-Denny Casey moves to approve minutes, Bill Portlock seconded, all voted in favor, motion passes and minutes approved.
- May 2014 Minutes-Mike Foreman makes motion, Suzie Gilley seconded. Motion passes, minutes approved.

Approve new member – Beth Hawse: Beth not present so this approval was moved to later in the meeting.

Treasurers' Report- provided by Ann Regn. Report was shared via presentation.

- Checking account balance: \$22,728.58
- Savings account balance: \$4,363.78
 - **Revenue:**
 - Mountains to Bay Academy: \$75,000 (NOAA) in second year of this grant
 - Chesapeake Bay Trust: \$15,000-Project with VSELA
 - NOAA ELP Planning: \$14,500 (reimbursement)

- WEI microgrant: ~\$1,000.00 (expected) This is a NOAA grant from DEQ which in the past has been transferred to VRUEC as a microgrant. This year, DEQ will not transfer funds but will provide a small grant to VRUEC for resources provided by VRUEC including accounting, website management, etc.
- **Expenses:** Including what Ann Regn and Suzie are expecting, Ann asks for comments on any budget considerations moving forward.
 - Env. Literacy Planning with Principals (NOAA)
 - VSELA
 - Survey Monkey
 - VAST Exhibit & support
 - NAAEE affiliate membership?

Greg Eaton moved to accept the treasurer's report and Tamra Willis seconded passes unanimously. Treasurer's report approved as provided.

VRUEC Grant Updates:

- Watershed Educators Institute: Page Hutchinson provided an update on the WEI. There is one final workshop left for this project year. WEI is a series of 8-10 workshops that focus on different issues related to watersheds. This is a project through DEQ focused on non-formal educators.
- NOAA BWET Watershed Academies: This is a project for formal educators. Attendees are required to join as a team of middle school educators from multiple disciplines. Potomac Watershed Academy is completed, James River Watershed Academy is completed, York/Rappahannock River Watershed.
 - Page provided a report on the upcoming Watershed Academies including dates and locations for this coming year. Several VRUEC members serve as hosts to the academies.
 - Kiptopeke will serve as a culmination for all Academies to meet together. This will be held May 13th weekend.
 - Page noted great support through all projects from VRUEC members with particular support from Soil & Water Conservation Districts for Watershed Academies and WEI.
 - Barbara Young and Stephanie DeNicola shared feedback on the impact these programs are having on educators and students.
 - Suzie noted that there is one more year left of this grant. VRUEC needs to determine whether the group will re-apply in the future and who will be the Principle Investigator. Deadlines are in December so an application must be submitted in 2014 to avoid a gap year in funding.
- NOAA BWET Environmental Literacy Planning: Barb Young provided the report. This grant is in year two. The first year was the study done by the Barnes' Group. This grant focuses on school principals noting buy-in of principals is essential to success. An extension will be requested to utilize this year and next year's funding at the same time. The plan is to target K-12 principals for buy in. The initial plan to have meetings with Principals in each region has been postponed to ensure this plan fits within the Executive Order once details of that are confirmed. Suzie asks for a committee to be formed to assist with this project. CBF staff notes that they have a system in place to engage principals. Suzie

notes that there is also a requirement to reach those outside of the Chesapeake Bay. Further discussion was held around the details of the grants purpose and shared brainstorming ideas to provide this resource moving forward.

- Lisa asks for narrative for previous grants to be posted to DropBox for the group to review the purpose of the grant and get an idea for anyone interested in being the PI on next grant.
- Ann Regn requests current PI to connect with NOAA for requesting no-cost extension by July.
- Chesapeake Bay Trust: Eric Rohdes shared update on grant from NOAA to CBT. Eric wrote a grant to CBT for \$15,000.00 with a purpose to engage K-12 Superintendents and key instructional leaders noting that these are key contacts between DOE and schools. The structure of the grant is designed so key instructional leaders will have face to face or online meetings in each region to raise awareness of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement, it's goals and what the outcomes are. Second portion of the grant is through a partnership between VSELA and VRUEC to raise awareness of the CBA. This awareness will be made through presentation of school systems already participating with successful programs. VSELA will also be a venue to share potential funding sources for completing projects and reaching goals of CBA. Discussion continued on benefits of this partnership with VSELA and the benefit of VRUEC members participating.

Past Action Items

VRUEC Natural Resources Guide update – Barbara Young noted that all but a few guides have been updated online and members in attendance noted that all should be accounted for. There were a few new topics to be considered. Ann Regn noted that Virginia Witmer suggested that Bay & Coast as topics be split into two instead of keeping them together. Suzie Gilley suggested reviewing chapters once more with Executive Order in mind, there might be some activity/lesson content that would be helpful to support the Challenges. This guide is located at the VA Naturally website as a resource for teachers.

New membership EE organization – David Ruble provided update on this organization. Seven focus group meetings, three writing sessions have been held to develop by-laws for organization. David noted challenges of a large geographic area in Virginia.

-There is almost a complete set of by-laws

-The Board of the group will have appropriate geographic representation. Existing Regional team leaders will be asked to serve on the founding board. The regional team leaders will gather this summer to confirm by-laws and present the purpose, mission, etc. of the new organization at the September Environmental Educators Conference. David shared the draft mission, membership, and how the Executive Board will be established.

-Lisa asked that the draft documents for the Association be shared on the Drop Box. David Ruble will share as draft noting that they are drafts and will change through upcoming summer development meetings.

-The current recommendation for membership cost is \$25.00/individual.

Strategic Planning Work Group Report: Mike Foreman shared work from summer committee meeting including goals of VRUEC Strategic Plan. Mike asked that leadership table the VRUEC Strategic Planning

process before getting through projects related to the Executive Order. This Strategic Plan will be posted on Drop Box for information. Members noted that the current document goals are still applicable.

-It was noted that the Member Reports should reflect goals of Strategic Plan. Mike Foreman and Beth Sokolik will continue to work on this through sharing the Goals document with members to create a process to allow VRUEC member reports to align with the goals.

Agenda Items that arise from Member Reports & Regional EE Network Report

-NOAA: Lisa Deaton shared report from NOAA that was distributed at the meeting and is included with minutes.

12PM-the group breaks for lunch.

1PM Meeting is reconvened

University EE Consortium-Joe Baust shared work on a meeting of members of the University community and working to get Universities more involved in EE. The group discussed work towards an endorsement in EE.

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement: Russ Baxter provided an overall update and overview of the history and status of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Agreement.

-Why a New Agreement? 2009 Presidential Executive Order was missing a local component. It was recognized that a collective project was necessary between Federal and local partners.

-The 2014 CBA sets new goals and renews commitments, full participation from all headwater states, Russ provided details on who signed and what the new agreement entails. The vision statement of the Agreement was shared with the group.

-The outline of how the Chesapeake Bay Program is working internally to achieve the vision and goals of the Agreement. The current phase for CBP is reviewing Management Strategies which will be finalized to entail a two year work plan. Mr. Baxter shared key elements of Management Strategies.

Some of the major points of the CBP: Clean Water, Abundant Life, Engaged Communities, Conserved Lands, and Climate Change. A timeline was shared which includes finalization of the management strategies by June 30th. An executive council meeting will be held on June 21st. Goal oriented work plans (two years) will be developed June 30-December.

-Chesapeake Bay Program is developing ChesapeakeStat to share progress of the Bay's health.

-Lisa Deaton provided additional details regarding the Organizational chart of CBP and how VRUEC members are already participating within the work of the Chesapeake Bay Program.

-Mike Foreman and Eric Rhoades shared information about the work of VRUEC members currently.

Chesapeake Bay Agreement Environmental Literacy work to date Eric Rhoades provided some background on the work of VRUEC and the Interagency Education work group to assist with development of the Management Strategies and input provided to CBP for Environmental Literacy goals.

Virginia NCLI report / Policy Committee-Bill Portlock provided an update on the Virginia No Child Left Inside. The group meets approximately twice per month. Bill provided a written report that was distributed to all members in attendance.

Executive Order 42 Establishing the Virginia Environmental Literacy Challenge: Lisa Deaton

-The group breaks into group work.

- **Environmental Literacy Challenge for Systemic Sustainability (ELCSS):** Four groups split to discuss potential criteria options for the ELCSS. Each group reported their discussions back to the entire membership.
- **Conservation Classroom Challenge Implementation:** Suzie Gilley shared work to date on the Classroom Challenge. The membership was asked to consider potential challenges to include in a new database available to teachers to access the challenges. This project was sent to committee for further development, lead by Suzie Gilley.

Set timeline for creation of Virginia's Environmental Literacy Plan: Mike Foreman will lead a committee to work on the logistics of this.

Next Meeting: The group agreed to hold October 6th, the eve of the Virginia EE Conference as a potential next meeting date.

Officer nominating committee: Eric Rhoades Tamra Willis, and Cindy Duncan agreed to serve on the nominating committee to prepare 2016-2017 slate of officers. Lisa Deaton announced that she will be stepping down as acting VRUEC Chair in June due to a job change. Ellen Powell will primary Dept. of Forestry representative at VRUEC.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15PM

NCLI Report:

Memo

To: VRUEC

From: Bill Portlock, VRUEC Policy Committee Chair

Re: 2014-15 Actions and Proposed Virginia NCLI Plan, June 2015—March 2016

May 27, 2015

Summary Background:

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation launched the Virginia No Child Left Inside Coalition* in June 2014 in order to promote policies and programs that will ensure high school students in the Commonwealth graduate as environmentally literate citizens prepared for the conservation challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Over the past year, CBF has lead the VNCLI Coalition in the following key actions and achievements:

- Inclusion of a stand-alone goal for environmental literacy in the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Agreement;
- Engagement of Virginia's First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe in promoting environmental literacy through her participation in a mini-field experience aboard *Baywatcher* and in her remarks as keynote speaker at the 2014 Green Schools National Conference;
- Engagement of the SOL Innovation Committee through public comments by Bill Portlock during 2 separate full committee meetings and VNCLI sign on letter; and,
- Establishment by Executive Order of a *Governor's Challenge for Environmental Literacy* on Earth Day 2015: <https://governor.virginia.gov/media/3797/eo-42-establishing-the-virginia-environmental-literacy-challenge.pdf>

The Governor's Challenge to school divisions is an encouraging step toward advancing systemic environmental literacy, particularly in the context of the Bay Agreement outcomes for environmental literacy. At the same time, the SOL Innovation Committee is turning its attention towards the development of new SOL and alternative assessments, which may offer an additional opportunity to strengthen the use of the local environment as a context for learning.

Based on successes to date, recommendations from the VA Department of Education, and upcoming opportunities for SOL revision, there are four primary, possible areas of activity for the Virginia No Child Left Inside Coalition (VNCLI) in the coming months:

1. Advocate for dedicated funding for systemic environmental literacy in Virginia.

Having laid a foundation of administrative support for environmental literacy and built an impressive cadre of charter members, including the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, VNCLI and its partners are well positioned to launch a grassroots effort to secure a public funding stream to support school divisions in meeting the criteria laid out in the Governor's Environmental Literacy Challenge.

2. Monitor and engage in the work of the SOL Innovation Committee's Assessment Subcommittee.

VNCLI has been closely following the work of the SOL Innovation Committee. In March 2014, the full committee heard from a panel of business leaders who emphasized the need for future employees to have so-called "soft skills" such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork. They made the case that these skills—which are not assessed—are more important in some cases than content or technical knowledge, which employers can more readily teach new employees. VNCLI suggested that a similar panel presentation on environmental literacy would be an appropriate follow-up to that business presentation and requested getting onto the Full Committee agenda or the Assessment Subcommittee agenda. A panel presentation to the committee should include some preliminary suggestion(s) for how alternative assessments might be used to bolster environmental literacy while measuring students' inquiry, problem solving, and/or critical thinking skills. Dr. Tamra Willis has done work in the development of alternative assessments and would be an excellent partner and presenter in this effort.

3. Monitor and engage in the Science SOL review and revision process beginning in 2016.

By statute, the Virginia General Assembly requires periodic review of the state's learning standards. A formal comment window for the each review (every seven years) is traditionally open at several points during the process. The science standards of learning are next scheduled for review during the 2016-2017 school year. The VDOE Office of Science has stated its commitment to assembling "a broad-based team, including environment and resource education professionals" to examine public input and make recommendations for potential changes. In keeping with the regulatory process, any proposed revisions to the science standards of learning will be presented to the state Board of Education for consideration.

*** VNCLI Charter Members**

Caretakers of God's Creation
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Center for Excellence in Environmental Education at Longwood University
Claytor Nature Center of Lynchburg College
James River Association
Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
Mary Baldwin College
Mid-Atlantic Marine Education Association
Norfolk Southern Corporation
Project Green Teens
Rice Rivers Center at Virginia Commonwealth University
Sentara Healthcare
Smithfield Foods, Inc.

Charter members (cont.)

Garden Club of Virginia
Trinity Presbyterian Earth Care House Church
Virginia Association of Science Teachers
Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Virginia Beach City Public Schools
Virginia Chamber of Commerce
Virginia Conservation Legacy Fund
Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited
Virginia Environmental Endowment
Virginia Forestry Association
Virginia League of Conservation Voters
Virginia Project Learning Tree
Virginia Science Education Leadership Association
Youth Learning as Citizen Environmental Scientists